

The background of the entire cover is a photograph of a mosque at sunset. The sky is a deep orange and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon. The mosque's silhouette is prominent in the foreground, featuring three tall, slender minarets and a large dome. Several birds are captured in flight against the bright sky. The title text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

Alice Visits a Mosque to Learn About Judgement Day

A play about what
to expect

Bernard Payeur

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PLAY/SCRIPT

Remembering Uzza
If Islam was explained to me in a pub

REALITY

Love, Sex and Islam

Introduction

The dialogue is made up, but the revelations are real, as are the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (the authenticated hadiths are from the Bukhari and/or Sahih Muslim collection unless otherwise indicated).

The character of Alice only bears a remote resemblance to the heroine of Lewis Carroll's tale of a young girl "who falls down a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated by peculiar, anthropomorphic creatures." The world that the imam describes to Alice is not a fantasy, it is real (or will be), and is based on the Koran and observations of the Prophet Muhammad.

Quoted verses are all from Majid Fakhry's Al-Azhar approved "English Translation of the Meanings". Publishers Weekly wrote of Fakhry's notable accomplishment: "Succeeds in expressing the meanings of the original Arabic in simple readable English."

Verse numbers in Alice are for reference only; and except were indicated, are not meant to be part of the conversation between Alice and the imam.

Alice visits a Mosque to learn about Judgement Day is meant to teach about an important concept in Islam on which the Koran expounds at length. The play is not meant to offend but to enlighten. We hope you will read it in the spirit it was written.

ACT I

The stage is dark except for a spotlight on a minbar, a pulpit in a mosque, where an imam (prayer leader) is reciting revelations from the Koran about Judgement Day with which he will lead the congregation during Friday prayers. Except for the first seven revelations, which are repeated at the beginning of every prayer session, all verses of the Koran are meant to be prayers, with the prayer leader deciding which revelations will be part of that day's worship. Today's worship will be mostly revelations about Judgement Day.

1:1 In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful,

1:2 Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds,

1:3 The Compassionate, the Merciful,

1:4 Master of the Day of Judgement,

1:5 Only You do we worship, and only You do we implore
for help.

1:6. Lead us to the right path,

1:7 The path of those You have favoured. Not those who
have incurred Your wrath or have gone astray.

...

80:33 Then, when the Deafening Blast shall sound;

80:34 On the Day when man shall run away from his
brother,

80:35 His mother and his father,

80:36 His consort and his sons.

80:37 To every one of them on that Day is a business
sufficing him.

80:38 Some faces on that Day, will be bright,

80:39 Laughing and joyful;

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80:40 And other faces, on that Day, will be covered with dust,

80:41 Enveloped in smoke.

80:42 Those are the unbelievers, the profligate.

The imam's preparations are interrupted by a soft, apprehensive "hello". A second spotlight reveals a young woman wearing a white robe and a red hood.

Alice: Hello.

Imam: Who are you, and what are you doing here? I do not see a man with you. What are you doing here by yourself young lady?

Alice: I have come here to learn about Judgement Day.

Imam: You don't know about Judgement Day. You are not a believer. Get out of here immediately! Allah said:

9:17 The unbelievers should not enter Allah's Mosques bearing witness thereby against themselves that they are unbelievers. The works of those are vain and in the Fire they will abide forever.

Alice: A friend who knows the Koran very well told me that Allah also said:

9:6 And if any one of the idolaters should seek refuge with you, give him refuge, so that he may hear the Word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who do not know.

The imam is somewhat taken aback by Alice's response.

Imam: You don't look like an idolater?

Alice: What does an idolater look like?

Imam: Never mind. What is it you want to know about Judgement Day?

Alice: Everything.

Imam: Everything! How dare you presume that I have the time to tell you about Judgement Day, you, a female and an unbeliever who dares enter Allah's Mosque without first removing her shoes?

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Alice: I am so sorry, I did not know [*bends down to remove her shoes, and in a defensive tone*], but I did wear a scarf – I mean a hood – and I am not an unbeliever. I believe in the same god you do – I think – and I sort of believe in a Judgement Day.

Imam: You “think” and you “sort of believe” in a Judgement Day. You are no believer! Believing in a Judgement Day is the fifth most important belief, just after believing in the one and only God, His angels, the revealed books of the Prophets and the Prophets themselves. It is all in the Holy Koran, the greatest book on Earth and in the heavens, and in which a believer believes with certainty. Allah said:

45:20 This (Qur’an) is an illumination for mankind, a guidance and mercy unto a people who believe with certainty.

Alice: The Bible does not go on and on about Judgement Day, which is not the case of the Koran, I am told. Perhaps, if I knew more about Judgement Day, I would believe with certainty.

Imam: Insolent girl! Allah does not go on and on about Judgement Day. If He reveals so much, and warns so much in His Koran, it is because He wants to spare the unbelievers the scourge of His Fire by scaring them into believing, and to keep the believers on the straight and narrow path to Paradise. If more unbelievers knew what Allah has in store for them on Judgement Day, they would flee to Islam in terror!

Alice: I am not afraid of being scared into believing.

Imam: You should be. Most unbelievers cannot handle the truth, which is why Allah has placed a seal upon their hearts and hearing and made them almost blind to It. Allah said:

2:6 Those who have disbelieved, whether you warn them or not, they will not believe.

2:7 Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing; their sight is dimmed and a terrible punishment awaits them.

Alice: I am willing to give truth a chance.

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Imam: Are you? Really! Allah in revelation 12:28 warned Joseph, son of Jacob, about a “woman’s guile” when the wife of his Egyptian host tried to have her way with him, ripping his shirt from behind in the process, which for Allah was a clear indication of her intention, even if she pretended otherwise. Allah said:

12:28 When he (the husband) saw that his (Joseph’s) shirt was torn from behind, he said: “This is part of your guile, you women. Your guile is indeed very great.”

If this is part of your guile, woman, you WILL burn in Hell; and may Allah forgive me if I have let myself be seduced by your guile. Ask your first question.

Alice: I have not come here to seduce you.

Imam: You have been warned. What is it you want to know? Be quick about it, I don't have all day.

Alice: Sorry. What is Judgement Day exactly?

Imam: Judgement Day is the Day when Allah will cause all who are alive to die, and then will bring them back to life to be judged, along with everyone who ever lived.

Alice: Just like in the Bible.

Imam: NO. The Bible got it almost right. Judgement Day in the Koran is the second judgement.

Alice: The second judgement!!! When was the first?

Imam: In Islamic Traditions, which are words and actions that can usually be traced to what the Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said or did, everyone will be judged shortly after being visited by ‘Izra’il, the angel of death. Forty days before a person dies a leaf with the soon-to-be-deceased’s name on it falls from a tree in Paradise just beneath Allah’s throne. ‘Izra’il picks it up and schedules a pick-up forty days hence.

Alice: Why forty days?

Imam: Ten, thirty, forty days, what does it matter? What is important is that the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said that when ‘Izra’il knocks on the door, even after he warned

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people about his coming, they will not recognize him and will ask him: "Who are you?"

Alice: So, the angel of death is not dressed in a black cloak and hood and carrying a sickle, which is a dead giveaway. Dead giveaway, get it?

Imam: Yes, I get it. The grim reaper, the person to whom you are referring, is just a myth. 'Izra'il is not a myth!

Alice: Of course. So the angel of death is the last person a living person will see?

Imam: No! That honour is reserved for the two angels who have been patiently and anonymously recording a person's good and bad deeds. These two angels, in the blink of an eye, will present the soon-to-be-deceased with their lifetime of good and bad deeds, after which the person whose name is on the leaf-of-record dies, but not his thinking, seeing, able-to-feel-pain soul which will sink into the ground where they passed away, but not before 'Izra'il has finished extracting it from the still-warm body, drawing it out like rough cotton through the eye sockets.

Alice: OUCH!

Imam: Death, like birth, is meant to be a painful transition. This painful procedure will give Satan one last chance to tempt a believer in agony to come over to the dark side by offering some relief from the pain caused by what the soft-hearted may consider an appalling soul extraction method.

Alice: And Allah will allow 'Izra'il to do this to people, to women and children who have been loyal to Him all their lives.

Imam: The children of true believers are raised to endure discomfort. On the threshold of Paradise, they will be able to stand the pain and not accept Satan's offer to reduce it, thereby avoiding a U-turn to Hell on Judgement Day. It is just one more way the Wise and Compassionate tests our faith to make sure we are worthy of His Paradise.

Alice: What happens to the "extracted soul"?

Imam: If it is meant to go to Hell, it will be given a glimpse of Hell, its final destination on Judgement Day. The horror-struck soul will then briefly escape 'Izra'il's grip and will fly to heaven and try all seven doors to the seven levels of heaven, only to be turned back by the angels guarding the entrances to Paradise. It will be forced to return to 'Izra'il, who will then stuff it back into the already decaying corpse. The re-constituted soul-body amalgamation will then begin its new life in the grave.

Alice: What grave? How could anyone have dug a grave in the short interval that you have described; or is extracting a soul through the eye sockets a time consuming exercise?

Imam: The grave I am talking about was prepared by Allah. Allah said:

40:68 It is He Who brings life and causes to die. Then, if He decrees a certain matter, He only says: "Be", and it comes to be.

Alice: Is the grave that Allah has prepared like a regular grave?

Imam: Of course not, you dimwitted girl, it is much bigger. The believer who died literally in Allah's good books will be provided with a spacious grave, complete with curtains and a bed. An unbeliever, or a believer who died while in Allah's bad books, will be confined to a cramped space with walls constantly closing in on them making their every breath a laboured one.

Alice: That would mean that the inside of the earth is one big honeycomb with Hell at the center.

Imam: Who says it is not?

Alice: Science.

Imam: Who are you going to believe, science or God? Remember, Allah is a master illusionist; He even has Christians believing that Jesus died on the cross. Allah said:

4:157 And their saying: "We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary and the Messenger of Allah." They neither killed nor crucified him; but it was made to appear so unto them. Indeed, those who differ about him are in doubt

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about it. Their knowledge does not go beyond conjecture, and they did not kill him for certain;

4:158 Rather Allah raised him unto Him. Allah is Mighty and Wise.

Alice: He would have to be Mighty indeed to hide all those graves.

Imam: Innocent girl, open your mind to the possibilities, even the possibility that life in the grave is life in another dimension.

Alice: That sounds like science fiction.

Imam: The science you referred to earlier is mostly science fiction. What is real is what Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, say is real.

Alice: And the Koran's description of what we see and don't see is what I have to believe with certainty to be a believer?

Imam: For a female you quickly grasp the essential. There may be hope for you if you believe in what I tell you, in Allah's revelations, with certainty.

Alice: But not for those confined to those horrible graves.

Imam: Not necessarily. Not if they pass the interrogation of Munkar and Nakir.

Alice: Who???

Imam: After the living dead have settled into their new surroundings, two black-skinned, blue-eyed angels by the name of Munkar and Nakir will burst into their grave and start questioning, for forty days non-stop, the decaying remains as to their religious beliefs and what they thought of the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*.

Alice: What would be the point?

Imam: Considering the horror that is life in the grave for the guilty, Allah wants to be sure that the occupant is really an unbeliever, or truly guilty of what the angel who recorded its bad deeds has accused it of.

Alice: Makes sense, sort of...

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Imam: One question the angels will ask will lead to the occupant incriminating itself, to admit that it was an unbeliever. Allah said:

7:37 For who is more unjust than he who fabricates lies about Allah or denies His Revelations? Those will get their share of the punishment ordained for them. When Our Messenger (the messengers of death in this case, the angels) come to take their souls they will say: "Where are those upon whom you called besides Allah?" They will say: "They have left us" and they will bear witness against themselves that they were unbelievers.

Alice: Why not ask the incriminating question first and be done with the interrogation? With millions of people dying every day I am sure that Munkar and what's his name have a lot of graves to visit?

Imam: Nakir. Munkar and Nakir will have other questions for the grave's occupant such as whether it ever said anything bad about the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*.

Alice: And what if it did?

Imam: The Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said, "When a human being is laid in his grave ... two angels come to him and make him sit and ask him: 'What did you use to say about this man, Muhammad?' He will say: 'I testify that he is Allah's slave and His Apostle.' Then it will be said to him, 'Look at your place in the Hell-Fire. Allah has given you a place in Paradise instead of it.'"

Alice: That was lucky.

Imam: Luck had nothing to do with it. The Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, also said that "the dead person will see both his places. But a non-believer or a hypocrite will say to the angels, 'I do not know, but I used to say what the people used to say! It will be said to him, 'Neither did you know nor did you take the guidance (by reciting the Quran).' Then he will be hit with an iron hammer between his two ears, and he will cry and that cry will be heard by whatever approaches him except human beings and jinns."

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Alice: Hit with a hammer!!! Is life in a dank confining hole in the ground for maybe thousands of years not hurt enough, not to mention the suffering to come?

Imam: Not by the exacting standards of the Compassionate; and it does not end there for those undeserving of His Mercy. The interrogation over, the occupant of the grave will continue to get twice daily visits, until Judgement Day, from another angel.

Alice: Is its visit to relieve the boredom of life in the grave?

Imam: This angel has not come to chat, but to open those curtains with that pleasing or horrifying view. The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said: "When any of you dies, he is shown his position (in the Hereafter) morning and evening. If he is one of the people of Paradise, he is shown the place of the people of Paradise. If he is one of the people of Hell, he is shown the place of the people of Hell. He is told, 'this is your position, until God resurrects you on the Day of Resurrection.'"

Alice: The nightmares that those whom Allah has already doomed to roast in Hell for an eternity will experience – that is, if they can even fall asleep with walls that continuously threaten to smother them. How absolutely horrible!

Imam: The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said that "we would faint in terror if we could hear the screams of those being tormented" in their graves.

Alice: If the claustrophobic, agonizing existence of life in the grave for unbelievers – an existence which combines both physical and psychological terrors to achieve an unprecedented level of horror and discomfort – were not god-inspired, then the Prophet Muhammad would probably be remembered today as one of the greatest sadistic minds the world has ever known, if not insane.

Imam: THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD, *THE PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF GOD BE UPON HIM*, IS NOT A SADIST AND NEITHER IS ALLAH; AND NEITHER OF THEM HAVE THE DEFICIENCY OF THE MIND COMMON IN FEMALES. THE UNBELIEVERS WILL ONLY GET WHAT THEY DESERVE FOR NOT BELIEVING IN ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER.

Alice: Of course, and I apologise for my ill-considered and wrong-headed supposition that Allah and His Messenger might not be immune to human neurosis; but surely, Allah does not believe that women which He created, as a gender are stupid – I mean mentally deficient?

Imam: Allah said:

2:282 ... And call to witness two witnesses of your men; if not two men, then one man and two women from such witnesses you approve of, so that if one of them (the two women) fails to remember, the other will remind her.

Alice: What about the Prophet?

Imam: No one knows the Mind of Allah like His Messenger. The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, explained why Allah would say such a thing, that the testimony "of a woman is equal to half that of a man?" and that it was "because of the deficiency of the woman's mind."

Alice: Most women I know are not feeble-minded, quite the opposite; for example, in "our" country, yours and mine, women doctors now outnumber men, or will shortly, and is there another profession that is more demanding in mental ability and physical stamina?

Imam: There are always exceptions to the rule, but an undisputed failing of females is their soft-heartedness, which, in another exception to the rule, you find in some Islamic scholars for whom life in the grave as described by the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, was too much even by Allah's standards. These scholars looked to the Koran for a reason to modify the Prophet's, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, horrific descriptions. They found it, they believe, in something Allah said. God said:

23:99 Yet, when death visits one of them, he says: "Lord bring me back (to the world);

23:100 "That perchance I might act rightly with respect to what I have omitted." No, it is just a word he is uttering; and behind them is a barrier till the day they are raised from the dead.

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These scholars, exhibiting a typical female response to harsh justice, have interpreted “barrier” as meaning unconsciousness. For these weak interpreters of Allah's Revelations, the interrogation by Munkar and Nakir will not last more than forty days, and then the object of their suspicions will sink into blissful unconsciousness until awakened on Judgement Day.

Alice: Why do you keep saying "the peace and blessings of God be upon him" every time the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned?

Imam: Muslims believe that whenever we wish peace upon the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, an angel goes to the Prophet's, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, grave and brings him the good news. On the Day of Judgement, Allah will listen to some pleas for mercy from the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, for those Allah, the Merciful, has sentence to Hell's Fire. Since the Compassionate will only allow a limited number of pleas, the more blessings you wish on the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, the better your chances that the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, will intercede on your behalf if you have done something for which Allah believes you should spend an eternity in His Hell.

Alice: The Prophet will also be spending time in the grave.

Imam: Of course; there are no exceptions.

Alice: After life in the grave, how bad could Judgement Day be for unbelievers? At least, for those whom Allah will cause to die on the eve of the big Day, it will be a short time and they will not have to put up with the forty day interrogation by Munkar and the Nakir and risk being pummelled with an iron bar?

Imam: Hammer. [*having never considered this possibility, the imam does not know how to respond*] I, I ... I am not so sure.

Alice: If the unbelievers have already been judged on or about the time they died, why the second Judgement?

Imam: The Last Judgement is Allah and Allah's alone. Judgement Day will also provide Allah with one last opportunity to humiliate the unbelievers in front of the believers; to deride them for not believing; to publicly enjoy the terror that they will experience when

they realize there is no hope, that they will be spending an eternity in agony.

Alice: Taking pleasure from other peoples' discomfort!!! What is that again?

Imam: It's not only Allah who will take pleasure in the unbelievers' predicament. Judgement Day is also to give the believers their own opportunity to laugh at the unbelievers, to mock them as the Compassionate drags them in chains, kicking and screaming into His Fire.

Alice: That does not sound like a compassionate, merciful god to me?

Imam: O, but He is; but only believers are deserving of His Compassion and Mercy, and rightly so.

Alice: If you say so?

Imam: ALLAH SAYS SO. Remember that!

Alice: When will we be able to see Allah's Compassion and Mercy in action?

Imam: No one knows when Judgement Day will be upon us. Allah did not even confide the date to His most trusted and greatest Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*. Allah said:

7:187 They ask you about the Hour, when it will strike. Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord; none but He will disclose it at the right time. It will be fateful in the heavens and on earth, and will not come upon you except suddenly." They ask you, as though you know about it. Say: "The knowledge thereof is with Allah, but most people do not know."

Alice: So, there will be no warning?

Imam: Not necessarily. The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said that when women outnumber men, and women singers are everywhere, the end will be near.

Alice: So women will be responsible for bringing on the end of the world, and it should be soon?

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Imam: While women figure prominently in Allah's doomsday scenario, the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, also said that when the end is near, the worst people will be chosen as leaders, and it is reasonable to assume that most of these will be men.

Alice: Allah, from what I have been told, is very much into signs; did He reveal in His Koran any signs that the end is near?

Imam: If you look up and the color of the sky varies from yellowish to a dark reddish color and mountains are bounding around like tumbleweeds in the wind – if they have not been transformed into heaps of sand, that is – then chances are big things are about to happen. Allah said:

70:8 On the Day when heaven will be like molten brass;

70:9 And the mountains like tufted wool.

73:14 On the Day when the earth and the mountains shall tremble, and the mountains shall turn into heaps of sand.

Alice: That's it?

Imam: There's more, a lot more. For example, in response to a question about the Day of Resurrection, one of a handful of synonyms for Judgement Day, asked of the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, here is what Allah had to say:

75:6 He asks: "When is the Day of Resurrection coming?"

75:7 Then, when the sight is dazzled;

75:8 And the moon is eclipsed;

75:9 And the sun and the moon are joined together;

75:10 Man will say on that Day; "Where is the escape?"

75:11 No, there shall be no escape.

Alice: The moon is on average 92 million miles or so from the sun. In any event, both the earth and the moon would be burnt to a cinder before any merging could take place.

Imam: In the Koran, the moon and the sun appear to be approximately the same size and occupy the same orbit above what

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some have said is a flat earth because of revelations from Allah that He flattened it and leveled it off, revelations 43:10, 67:17, 79:30 and others. It is these celestial bodies' race across the sky which causes night and day. If this is the case, on Judgement Day one will catch up with the other and merge, causing the grey gloominess – neither night nor day – befitting Judgement Day.

Alice: If the heavens are what Allah says they are, and not the illusion that is the evidence collected by astronomers, the images from Hubble and Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon, then Allah's explanation has the ring of authenticity.

Imam: Of course it does, as do still more revelations about the coming of Judgement Day where the sun is all coiled up. Allah said:

81:1 When the sun shall be coiled up;

81:2 And when the stars shall be scattered about (fall);

81:3 And when the mountains shall be set in motion;

81:4 And when the pregnant camels shall be discarded;

81:5 And when the beasts shall be corralled;

81:6 And when the seas shall rise mightily;

81:7 And when souls shall be paired off;

81:8 And when the buried infant shall be asked:

81:9 "For what sins was she killed?"

81:10 And when the scrolls shall be unrolled;

81:11 And when heaven shall be scraped off;

81:12 And when Hell shall be stoked;

81:13 And when Paradise shall be brought near;

81:14 Then each soul shall know what it had brought forth.

Alice: You're making that up?

Imam: Would I lie to you? Allah not only swore to it, but also that the angel Gabriel, who brought His Revelations to the Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, was to be trusted because of the angel's close relationship with God. Allah said:

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81:15 No I swear by the alternating stars;

81:16 Which circle then hide;

81:17 And the night when it recedes;

81:18 And the morning when it breaks,

81:19 It is truly the discourse of a noble Messenger (the Angel Gabriel who brought Allah's revelations to the Prophet);

81:20 Who has power, with the Lord of the Throne, and is highly placed;

81:21 Obeyed, then trustworthy.

Alice: You have to be mad!

Imam: They said the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, was mad. You have to be mad not to believe! It is the truth, and if you cannot trust the angel Gabriel who told the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, what Allah told him to say, then who can you trust? Allah said:

81:22 Your Companion (the Prophet Muhammad) is not mad;

81:23 He saw him (Gabriel) upon the luminous horizon.

Alice: Did the Prophet drink at all?

Imam: Of course not. Allah forbids it. But on Judgement Day, everyone will stumble about like drunks. Allah said:

22:1 O people, fear your Lord. Surely the clamour of the Hour is a terrible thing.

22:2 The Day you will witness it, every suckling mother will be distracted from the child she is suckling, and every pregnant woman will deliver her burden, and you will see people drunk, whereas they are not drunk; but the punishment of Allah is terrible.

Alice: Did Allah actually say "every pregnant woman will deliver her burden" at the outset of the Day of Judgement?

Imam: Allah reveals what Allah reveals, and what Allah reveals is the truth, even the “terrible” truth.

Alice: O MY GOD! That means when Judgement Day is eminent, while thousands of women will be singing their hearts out, millions of other women around the world will be screaming in pain as they give birth to premature babies or spontaneously aborted fetuses. I thought Islam was against abortion?

Imam: Not only is Islam against abortion, it is against all forms of artificial impediments to conception.

Alice: O MY GOD! That means that it will be mostly believing women who will spontaneously give birth or be aborted with the excruciating pain the tearing will cause, and no anesthetics. If it was mostly unbelieving women whom Allah will relieve of their burden in such a manner, I might understand that in His Mind they had it coming, but believing women ...?

Imam: Millions of women experience such trauma every day. It is not exceptional to Judgement Day except in scope. Allah is simply accelerating the process. He is not causing any pain or discomfort that would not have been theirs, Judgement Day or no Judgement Day.

Alice: What about the millions, perhaps tens of millions of babies, born on the worst of days; babies whose drunk-like mothers, Allah said, will be so distracted by what is going on that they may forget to suckle them or not suckle them adequately, with stumbling drunk-like fathers unable to provide any kind of guidance or support. How awful. What does Allah have against babies?

Imam: Nothing! Allah will take care of them I am sure.

Alice: Does He say so in His Koran?

Imam: No, but that does not mean that babies will not be taken care of.

Alice: I was told that Allah said His Koran contained everything anyone ever wants to know.

Imam: Yes, He did say that. Allah said:

68:35 Shall We consider those who submit like those who are criminals?

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68:36 What is the matter with you; how do you judge?

68:37 Or do you have a Book in which you study?

68:38 Wherein there is whatever you choose.

Alice: But if I try to look up what will happen to babies on Judgement Day, there is nothing.

Imam: Yes, it is a bold statement: “a Book in which there is whatever you chose,” and in a relatively small book at that, only about one tenth the size of the Bible, the King James Version. But for a God as wise and powerful as Allah, it was possible to reveal everything that one *needs to know* in such a relatively small book, a book in which He does talk about babies. He even has the world’s most famous baby speak only a few hours after his birth. Allah revealed that Jesus' first words, after Mary brought him to her people, were to repudiate his divinity. Allah said, that Jesus said:

19:30 ... Indeed, I am the servant of Allah, Who gave me the Book and made me a Prophet.

Alice: But still, He never fathered a child; if He had, maybe He would relate to them on a more personal level in His Book About Everything?

Imam: Allah does not father babies, He creates them. Who is more knowledgeable about babies than one who creates them? Allah said:

80:17 Man may perish! How thankless he is!

80:18 Of what did He create him?

80:19 Of a sperm, He created him and determined him.

Alice: Still, what a horrendous way to start Judgement Day, by punishing mothers and babies.

Imam: CHILDBIRTH IS NOT PUNISHMENT!

Alice: Could it be that Allah does not want to judge pregnant women, or does not want women giving birth during the proceedings and causing a commotion, and that is why He will cause millions of premature births and millions of fetuses to suddenly abort?

Imam: I can understand a female's preoccupation with babies; but is not Allah, by causing all those babies to be born before Judgement

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Day, giving women one less thing to worry about when they appear before him to be judged?

Alice: When you put it that way... If only I was sure the babies would be okay and the aborted fetuses and dead premature babies given a dignified burial, something that I know may be impossible to do on such a chaotic miserable day.

Imam: They will be taken care of, of that I am sure, and nothing is impossible for Allah.

Alice: What do you mean by that?

Imam: All babies may be born full grown when Allah relieves pregnant females of their burdens.

Alice: THAT IS EVEN WORSE! How big do men think the birth canal is?

Imam: THEY WILL APPEAR FULL GROWN AFTER BIRTH, YOU STUPID WOMAN. In two sayings of the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, recorded by a scholar by the name of Tirmidi, God's Messenger said: "...When a believer hopes for a child in Paradise, his gestation and his birth and his growth will be in one hour as he will wish." and that "in Paradise everyone will be 30 or 33 years old."

Alice: Couldn't Allah have simply announced Judgement Day nine months beforehand so that if a woman became pregnant in the meantime, it would be her own fault if Allah was forced to end her pregnancy prematurely?

Imam: That is not how it works. If Allah announced the coming of Judgement Day so that there is no doubt in anyone's mind about what comes next, then everyone will submit and Allah will have fewer people and jinn to judge, and fewer people to keep the fires of His Hell burning.

Alice: Wouldn't that be a good thing? And what is this about people keeping Hell's fire going?

Imam: No, it would not be a good thing. People have to submit not knowing what comes next, on His Messenger's say so; that is the test. This is why Allah will not accept any conversions on Judgement Day

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when what comes next will be there for all to see and experience. As to Hell's Fire, it is a very special fire. Allah said:

2:24 ... guard yourself against the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers.

Alice: He does not need people to stoke His Fire; people are the combustible. WOW! I would never have imagined; but how diabolically practical and how appalling, people on fire burning other people on fire. I thought life in the grave and what happens there, and what will happen at the outset of Judgement Day, was insanely creative but people burning people... I don't know what to say.

Imam: Then don't say anything; it only makes you look stupid. Allah is creative but not, as you foolishly put it "insanely creative"; that would be like saying that Dante's Inferno or the Book of Revelation and its description of the beast is the work of a madman.

Alice: There is a beast in the Koran!!! Does the beast have a number like in the Book of Revelation?

Imam: The reference in the Koran is to a beast that will come out of the ground, a beast which may or may not be Allah in disguise. On the cusp of Judgement Day, the beast will ask a "throng" from each nation why they denied Its Signs. Allah said:

27:82 And when the Word (the Devine Decree) is fulfilled against them, We shall bring out of the earth for them a beast which shall address them thus: "Mankind has not believed with certainty in Our Signs."

27:83 On the Day when we shall muster from each nation a throng of those who denied Our Signs; then they will be held in check.

27:84 Until they come forward and He says: "Have you denied My Signs, and did not comprehend them? Otherwise, what were you doing?"

Alice: Is Allah, or His avatar, accusing [*making air quotes*] "the throngs" of denying His signs, or of not understanding them?

Imam: It does not matter. It is all the same; they are all wrongdoers. How could anyone claim not to understand who made the night and

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the day, one of the more obvious of Allah's Signs, and why? That is why Allah said they would be cast face first into His Fire. Allah said:

27:85 And the Word shall come down upon them for their wrongdoing and so they will not speak.

27:86 Do they not see that We made the night, so that they might rest in it, and the day so that they might see? Surely in that are signs for a believing people.

27:90 And those who perpetrate an evil deed, their faces will be cast into the Fire. Will you be rewarded except for what you used to do?

Alice: After the beast has made its appearance, what happens next?

Imam: A trumpet will be blown. Scholars disagree on the sequence as to whether the beast comes before the trumpet is blown or after.

Alice: At this point, what does it matter?

Imam: It matters, and you should take this [*mimicking her air quotes*] "matter" seriously. Islamic scholars do not labour night and day, often for years, to explain trivia.

Alice: I am sorry; I did not mean to imply that it was trivia. I just meant that it's really the Judgement that matters. Everything else is simply a buildup to the main event, a very interesting build-up I might add; a buildup worthy of a God, I might also add.

Imam: There is no god worthier than Allah!

Alice: Who will be blowing what will have to be the most humongous trumpet ever if everyone on Earth is expected to hear it?

Imam: The angel Israfil, who has been waiting all his life for this one big occasion, will do the honours, blowing his massive horn not once, but twice. The first blow will kill anyone who is still living...

Alice: Even the undead dead, the people in the graves?

Imam: [*ignores her*] After everyone is dead, Israfil will blow his horn a second time. This second blast will raise the dead who will begin marching out of their graves like zombies (or maybe locusts) in a ghoulissh procession in Israfil's direction to gather in a place which

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Islamic traditions hold to be somewhere in present day Syria. Allah said:

39:68 And the Trumpet shall be blown, so that whoever is in the heavens and on earth shall be made to expire, save him whom Allah wishes. Then it shall be blown another time, and behold, they shall arise, looking out.

36:51 ... then behold how from their graves, unto their Lord, they slink away.

54:7 ... with their eyes downcast, as if they were swarming locusts,

54:8 Scrambling towards the caller. The unbelievers will say: "This is a very hard day."

Alice: Will it be a mad scramble?

Imam: No. Allah's Koran is all about creating an ordered god-fearing society. Judgement Day reflects Allah's love of orderliness. Most will walk towards the caller in row upon row. Allah said:

18:47 And on the Day We shall cause the mountains to move and you see the earth uncovered, and We gather them all, having left no one behind.

18:48 And they will be brought before your Lord in rows: "Now you come to Us as We created you for the first time. Nay, you claimed that We would not fix for you an appointed time."

Alice: Will it be a long walk?

Imam: No. Both Paradise and Hell will be brought forward. Allah said:

50:31 Paradise will be brought closer to the God-fearing, not a far distance.

89:23 And Hell is brought forth on that Day. Then man will remember on that Day; but wherefrom will remembrance come to him?

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89:24 He will say: "Would that I had advanced something for (this) my life!"

89:25 On that Day, none shall punish like His (Hell's) punishment.

89:26 And none shall bind with fetters like His.

Alice: Paradise and Hell are moveable objects?

Imam: Paradise is a place and Hell is a living thing. A gigantic humungous breathing nightmarish thing which, the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said will have to be dragged to its appointed place on Judgement Day by seventy thousand angels pulling on seventy thousand ropes.

Alice: You would think something that big could be seen from the earth, unless it is the sun, but even seventy thousand angels pulling on seventy thousand fire-resistant ropes I don't think could move it

Imam: Hell is not the sun but like the sun, you feel its effect every day. The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, said that Allah allowed [Hell] to take two breaths – one in the winter and the other in the summer and this is the cause of the severe heat and bitter cold you experience during these two seasons.

Alice. Then that means that Hell is a two-headed monster. One head whose breathing causes the seasons in the northern hemisphere and the other in the southern hemisphere, since the seasons are reversed above and below the equator.

Imam: Don't be silly. A two headed Hell!!! That is ridiculous.

Alice: Sorry. Will Paradise and Hell be close enough to Earth for people to jump into it or on it?

Imam: The god-fearing will be able to reach Paradise via a ramp or wall called the Ramparts. Allah said:

7:46 Between them (the people of Paradise and the people of the Fire) is a veil, and on the Ramparts are men who know everyone by his mark. And they will call out to the People of Paradise: "Peace be upon you." That is, before they enter it, though they hope to do so.

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Other believers will be taken to Paradise by angels. Allah said:

16:30 And, it is said to those who fear God: "What has your Lord revealed?" They say: "Something good." To those who do good in this world is the good reward; and the Hereafter is surely much better. Blessed indeed is the abode of the God-fearing!

16:31 Gardens of Eden they shall enter, beneath which rivers flow. They will have therein whatever they desire. Thus Allah rewards the God-fearing.

16:32 Those whom the angels will carry off while in a state-of-grace, saying: "Peace upon you; enter Paradise for what you did."

Alice: What about the unbelievers?

Imam: They, too, will be carried off by angels, but the flight will not be as pleasant. Allah said:

47:27 How then, will it be when the angels shall carry them off, beating their faces and their buttocks?

Alice: I always thought that angels only did good things, dragging Hell to within a short flying distance of the unbelievers notwithstanding.

Imam: Not the charmer!

Alice: The what???

Imam: Allah said:

75:22 On that Day, faces shall be radiant,

75:23 Looking upon their Lord.

75:24 And faces, on that Day, shall be scowling;

75:25 Thinking that a disaster shall be wrecked upon them.

75:26 No indeed, when (the soul) reaches the breast-bones,

75:27 And it is said: "Who shall be the charmer?"

According to Abul A'la Moududi, a foremost authority on Allah's Book and the first recipient of the King Faisal International Award for

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his contribution to Islamic studies and our understanding of the Koran, "charmer" refers to the angel from the Punishment contingent who will carry off the reborn unbeliever, as opposed to the angel from the Mercy contingent who will carry off the believer.

Alice: How charming! How should people dress?

Imam: It might be a good idea for unbelievers to wear fireproof clothing, not that it will make much difference.

Alice: Should women wear pants to avoid an upskirt moment as they are being lifted aloft by Allah's winged servants?

Imam: An upskirt moment!!!

Alice: People on the ground might catch a glimpse of their underwear, or worse.

Imam: Oh! Allah does not like pants on women. There will be no, to use your vulgar expression, "upskirt moments" for believing women who, for the occasion, will have put on Allah's head-to-toe finery. Allah said:

7:32 Say: "Who has forbidden Allah's finery which He fashioned for His servants, or the good things He provided?" Say: "These are meant, in the present world, for those who believe, and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection." Thus We make clear Our Revelations for a people who know.

Alice: Can people stop for a smoke on the way to be judged?

Imam: Smoking is bad for you, don't you know that?

Alice: I am trying to stop, but what if I can't stop before Judgement Day? With all the stress...

Imam: There will be a lot of smoke on Judgement Day; just take a deep breath, if you dare, along with all those who will be pleading not to be sent to Hell, claiming they were true believers, which they were not. Allah said:

44:8 There is no god but He. He gives life and causes to die; your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.

44:9 Yet, in doubt, they frolic.

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44:10 Await, then, the Day when heaven shall bring forth visible smoke;

44:11 Enveloping the people. This is a painful punishment.

44:12 "Our Lord, lift the punishment from us, for we are true believers."

Alice: Why did Allah assume they were not true believers?

Imam: Allah does not assume. Allah knows. They may have believed in Allah but not in the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, whom they accused of being a "tutored madman." Nobody, but nobody calls any of Allah's Messengers madmen, and certainly not the Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, and gets away with it! Allah will have his revenge on Judgement Day. Allah said:

44:13 How can there be for them an admonition, when a manifest Messenger has already come to them?

44:14 But they turned away from him saying: "He is a tutored madman."

44:15 We will lift the punishment a little. Surely, you are reverting.

44:16 On the Day when We shall strike the mightiest blow, then We shall take our revenge.

Alice: Everything is about revenge with Allah, isn't it?

Imam: He will have His revenge only on those who were warned but ignored His warnings or said bad things about His Messengers.

Alice: That is still a lot of people. If Judgement Day occurred tomorrow three out of four people living would experience Allah's Wrath and end up as fuel for His Hell; and probably an even greater proportion of the *reborn deceased*.

Imam: Whatever the number, Allah can handle it. Allah said:

35:16 If He wishes, He will annihilate you and bring forth a new creation.

35:17 That for Allah is not a grave matter.

Alice: With the sun all coiled up, perhaps as a result of the collision with the moon, and all that visible smoke, won't it be difficult for those marching in row upon row not to crash into each other in the darkness?

Imam: Not the believers, for Allah will have provided them with a light. Allah said:

57:12 On the Day that you will see the believers, men and women, with their light beaming in front of them and in their right hands [the sign]: "Your good news today is Gardens beneath which rivers flow; dwelling therein forever. That indeed is the great triumph."

57:19 And those who believe in Allah and His Messenger are truly the pious and the martyrs in their Lord's Sight. They shall have their wage and their light; but those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs, are truly the companions of Hell.

Alice: If I don't have a light of my own, can I follow those with a light beaming in front of them from their right hand?

Imam: No. If you are not given a light, it is because you don't deserve one. Allah said:

57:13 On the Day the hypocrites, men and women, will say to the believers: "Wait for us, so that we may borrow from your light." It will be said: "Go back and seek for yourselves a light." Then a wall will be raised between them both, which has a door. On the inner part thereof is Mercy, and on the opposite side the outer part thereof is punishment.

57:15 Therefore, today no ransom will be taken from you (the hypocrites), nor from the unbelievers. The Fire will be your refuge; it will be your master; and what an evil fate!"

Alice: Isn't Allah again prejudging people by giving some a light and having them enter by a different door than those without?

Imam: No, the condition of one's grave will already have singled one out as worthy or not worthy of a light; and it is not a different door, it

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is the same door, which will close after all the believers have entered Paradise.

Alice: Then believers will emerge from their graves before the unbelievers, if not, how will Allah stop the unbelievers from mixing with the believers and entering heaven through that one big door before He has a chance to lock it?

Imam: No, everyone will emerge from their graves at the same time. Any unbelievers or hypocrite who tries to sneak into Paradise will be stopped by the angels guarding its borders. Allah said:

69:17 And the angels shall be ranged around its borders,
eight of whom will be carrying above them, on that Day,
the Throne of your Lord.

Alice: What is the difference between an unbeliever and a hypocrite?

Imam: A hypocrite is an unbeliever, but an unbeliever is not always a hypocrite. Hypocrites are first and often identified in the Koran as contemporaries of the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, who pretended to believe in God's Messenger but did not. To believe in Allah and not the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, is worse than not believing in either, which is why the hypocrites will suffer double the punishment.

Alice: Allah is not a nuanced type of god.

Imam: He is when it comes to the pretenders to belief and who is deserving of a greater punishment.

Alice: I thought Allah valued unswerving, unthinking blind loyalty above all, and many of those He will roast, if only once for an eternity, were steadfast in their loyalty to Him, if not the Prophet?

Imam: You cannot be loyal to one without swearing allegiance to the other; that Allah has made abundantly clear.

Allah: What must I do so Allah does not interpret my cluelessness on Judgement Day as not having paid close enough attention to what His Messenger had to say about the big Day?

Imam: Everyone will be accompanied by two angels; one of the two who has been following them around all their life and recording their good and bad deeds in a book, and who will give this book of

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evidence to Allah, and another angel the Koran identifies as the driver. These angels will know what to do, and you will be able to easily follow them for everyone's vision will have been greatly improved. Allah said:

50:19 The death pang has come in truth. "That is what you were turning away from."

50:20 The Trumpet will be blown; "That is the Day of Warning."

50:21 Every soul will come forward with (an angel) driver and a (an angel) witness.

50:22 "You were oblivious of this; so We lifted your cover from you and your vision today is keen."

Alice: At two angels per person, that is a lot of angels, not counting the countless winged wonders milling around praising Allah as He is being paraded around on His Throne, the angels guarding the entrances to Paradise and those guarding Hell so that no unbelievers burning therein escapes and, of course, the angels from the Punishment and Mercy contingent.

Imam: The number of angels required will be significantly reduced for unbelievers that were part of a nation of unbelievers. They will be marched into the Fire as one, following their leaders into the Fire, as the people of Pharaoh will do. Only the leader will need to be guided to his final roasting place – I mean, final destination – which will be Hell. The first and last nations to enter Hell will shout accusations at the other, probably in unison so as to be heard above the din of Judgement Day. Allah said:

7:38 Allah will say: "Enter together with nations who have gone before you, jinn and men, into the Fire. Every time a nation enters it, it curses its sister-nation; so that when they shall have followed each other into it, the last of them will say of the first: "Our Lord, these led us astray; inflict on them a double punishment in the Fire." He will say: "A double [punishment] to each, but you do not know."

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7:39 And the first of them will say to the last: "In no way are you better than us; so taste the punishment for what you did."

Alice: Which Pharaoh, or will it be all the Pharaohs? If the angels are flying the unbelievers to Hell, including Pharaoh's people, I have to assume, while slapping their behinds, how will that reduce the number of angels?

Imam: Not all unbelievers will be flown to Hell obviously, and it is the Pharaoh of Moses, Rameses II. He is the only historical real-world leader singled out by Allah, although not by name, as making an appearance on Judgement Day. He will lead his people into Hell. It should be a magnificent procession of the downcast. Allah said:

11:97 ... Pharaoh's command was not sound.

11:98 He shall be at the head of his people on the Day of Resurrection; thus he shall lead them into the Fire. How wretched is the place to which they will be led!

Alice: Note to self: "Don't follow Pharaoh on Judgement Day; he's going where you don't want to go." At least those who don't have a leader to follow will have a driver; that is very considerate of Allah.

Imam: Not really. The driver angel and his friend will mean trouble, big trouble for those who believed in other gods, or worshipped the Son He never had. Allah said:

50:23 His companion (angel) will say: "This is what I have; it is ready."

50:24 (Allah will say): "Cast into Hell every obdurate unbeliever;

50:25 "Hinderer of the good, transgressor and doubter;

50:26 "Who has set up another god beside Allah. Cast him, then, into the terrible punishment."

It may also be the driver's responsibility to boil the unbelievers before herding them into Hell. Allah said:

40:70 Those who disbelieved in this Book and what We sent Our Messengers with; they shall surely know.

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40:71 When the fetters and chains shall be upon their necks
and they shall be dragged along.

40:72 In the boiling water; then, in the Fire they will be
consumed.

19:86 And drive the wicked into Hell as one thirsty herd.

Alice: Boiling people like lobsters before roasting them. I think I am
going to be sick.

Imam: Please don't. I warned you that you might not be able to
handle the truth, and there are more painful truths to come. Go home.

Alice: I'm going to be okay. So every unbeliever gets boiled before
being herded into Hell? Got it!

Imam: But not before being paraded around Hell's perimeter on their
knees, after which Allah will proceed with a selection of the most
guilty. Allah said:

19:66 Man says: "If I die, shall I be raised from the dead?"

19:67 Does not man remember that We created him before,
when he was nothing?

19:68 By your Lord then, We shall certainly gather them
together with the devils, then we will lead them around
Hell on their knees.

19:69 Then We shall seize from each group the most
rebellious against the Compassionate.

Alice: Why would the Compassionate do this, single out the most
rebellious, since everyone on parade is going to Hell?

Imam: To single them out for special treatment, for a double burning
for example. Allah said:

16:88 [As for] those who disbelieve and debar people from
the Path of Allah, We will add punishment to their
punishment on account of the mischief they used to make.

19:70 And We certainly know best who among them
deserves most to be burned therein (*that is Hell*).

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Alice: How often can you burn a person to a crisp?

Imam: As many times as you wish if you are Allah. Allah said:

4:56 Those who have disbelieved Our Signs, We shall surely cast them into the Fire; every time their skins are burnt, We will replace them by other skins, so that they might taste the punishment. Allah indeed is Mighty and Wise!

Alice: Will the believers enter Paradise individually, after perhaps a nice warm bath, or, like the unbelievers, do so in groups and individually?

Imam: Sarcasm does not become you, young lady, and Allah does not like the sarcastic. To answer your question, Allah said:

19:85 The Day we shall gather the God-fearing before the Compassionate as one party.

13:23 They shall enter the Gardens of Eden, together with the righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their posterity; and the angels shall enter upon them from every gate [saying]:

13:24 "Peace be upon you for your forbearance and blessed is the final Abode!"

13:25 As to those who break Allah's Covenant once it is contracted, sever what Allah commanded to be joined and spread corruption in the land, upon them shall be the curse and theirs is the evil abode (Hell).

Alice: What covenant did the Hell-bound break? What is a covenant?

Imam: A covenant is an agreement between a god and his supplicants. Allah's first covenant was with Adam and his progeny at a place according to the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, called Na'maan on the day of 'Arafah, the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, the 12th and final month of the Islamic calendar. Allah extracted a promise from Adam and his descendants, all his posterity that they would worship Him and only Him and believe in His Revelations, the last and most important being those contained in the Koran which supersede all others. Allah said:

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7:172 And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the Children of Adam their posterity and made them testify against themselves. [He said]: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes, we testify." [This] lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "We were in fact unaware of this."

Alice: They all agreed to submit to Allah and any descendant of Adam who refuses to submit, refuses to believe in Allah and His Messenger, has broken that Covenant?

Imam: Yes, and will burn in Hell, but not before being blinded.

Alice: To blind them! Why?

Imam: Because they shunned His Reminder, the Koran. Allah said:

20:124 "But he who shuns My Reminder will have a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up a blind man, on the Day of Resurrection."

20:125 He will say: "Lord, why did you raise me up a blind man, while I was originally capable of seeing?"

20:126 He (Allah) will say: "That is how our Revelations came to you, but you forgot them; and that is how, today, you shall be forgotten."

20:127 And that is how We reward the extravagant who would not believe in the Revelations of His Lord. The punishment of the Hereafter is surely more terrible and more lasting.

Alice: Then that means all unbelievers, billions upon billions of men, women and children will be blinded. O MY GOD!

Imam: Allah is speaking metaphorically.

Alice: [*places a hand over her heart*] Thank goodness.

Imam: Allah's Hell is not just about pain and terror on a cosmic scale; it is also, as I mentioned earlier, about Allah and the believers enjoying the spectacle of unbelievers in agony, twisting and turning and screaming as the Fire tries to consume them but the

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Compassionate keeps on replacing their burnt skin so that they never get even a fraction of a second of respite from the pain of burning.

Alice: Now that you mention it, I think I would rather be blind if it meant I would not have to look at the faces of people enjoying seeing me suffer.

Imam: And that is the point. Allah is master not only of physical pain, but the psychological as well. Remember the twice daily visit of the angel to the unbelievers in claustrophobic graves to show them a vision of Hell.

Alice: Don't remind me; the nightmares I can expect. O my god!

Imam: For the unbelievers in excruciating pain, the sight of what might have been will only add to their agonizing distress, and that is why Allah will not literally blind them. In fact, the Compassionate admits as much. Allah said:

36:66 And had We wished, We would have blotted out their eyes. Then they would race upon the pathway but how will they see.

36:67 And had We wished, We would have deformed them upon their own seats, so that they could not take off or turn back.

Alice: Rejoicing, getting pleasure from watching another of our kind who has never harmed us in any way, or wished us harm, in excruciating pain! If it wasn't for the sadism, that would be so childish!

Imam: It is not being childish! Allah is not a child or a sadist and neither are the people of Paradise, the believers! Enjoying seeing wicked people getting what they deserve is not sadism, it is celebrating the triumph of good over evil and there is nothing wrong with that. And as to children, they too will not be spared the terror of Judgement Day. Allah said:

73:17 So, how will you guard, if you disbelieve, against a Day which will make children white with fear?

Alice: Children being scared white! How awful! What kind of god takes pleasure in scaring children? I thought Jesus was one of Allah's

Messengers and Jesus loved and was very protective of the innocent; he even said that the Kingdom of Heaven was theirs?

Imam: Yes, Jesus was a Messenger of Allah, but not His son. That is a lie told by Christians to diminish the Compassionate. To associate other gods with Allah is the sin of shirk. There is no greater sin, and every time Christians say Allah has taken a son, they commit the greatest sin of all.

Alice: What about Jesus saying that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to children?

Imam: HE WAS WRONG! It belongs to Allah. It was to correct such miscommunications that Allah sent the perfect human being, the perfect communicator, His Greatest Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, to correct lesser, less capable Messengers like Jesus.

Alice: Still, it is difficult to believe that Jesus was the Messenger of a God who would brag about scaring children to the extent that blood will drain from their faces.

Imam: How many times do I have to say it? Allah loves children, and they will be welcomed in His Paradise if they behaved and feared and worshipped Allah and only Allah when told to do so. Allah on Judgement Day will treat children fairly, just like the adults who submitted, and just like their mothers and fathers, they will appear before him to be judged alone. Allah said:

31:33 O people fear your Lord and beware of the Day when no father shall stand for his child and no infant shall stand for his father in the least. Allah's promise is true, so let not the present life delude you or let any deceiver delude you regarding Allah.

Alice: O MY GOD! The poor children appearing before the same person who scared them almost to death, by themselves [*wipes away a tear*].

Imam: Do not refer to God as a person. He is Allah the Wise, the Magnificent, the All-Powerful.

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Alice: I am sorry [*regaining her composure*], you are right; no person that I know or have known is capable of what He is capable of.

Imam: Allah is capable of everything; He is Allah!

Alice: Is it possible that Allah's scaring of children has anything to do with Him making an orphan of His Greatest Messenger when he was only six years old, and wanting to make amends for depriving the Prophet of a normal childhood by getting back at children who grew up with one or both parents?

Imam: Allah does not make amends; He does not need to make amends. Have you not considered that Allah's scaring of children is done for the same reasons He frightens adults, so that they will be scared of Judgement Day and therefore remain loyal, and on the straight path that leads to Paradise?

Alice: I just think that if the Prophet Muhammad had grown up with a loving father and mother, he would have at least tried to temper Allah's terrorist side when it came to children [*sniveling*].

Imam: ALLAH IS NO TERRORIST!

Alice: Of course, it is not what I meant.

Imam: What people mistake for terrorism is simply a caring god acting in the best interest of His loyal followers, making sure they remain loyal by letting them know what is in store for them if they betray His Trust, and humiliating, and yes, scaring their common enemy, the unbelievers; BUT THAT DOES NOT MAKE HIM A TERRORIST.

Alice: Anymore, uh ... thoughtful tactics in Allah's Revelations about Judgement Day meant to keep the believers in line, and the unbelievers shaking, white with fear?

Imam: Verses about Judgement Day are everywhere in the Koran and like most other revelations, there is no timeline, and therefore, what happens next may have already happened.

Alice: Okay, I think I understand.

Imam: At one point in time, Allah will separate the good people from the bad, although there may be exceptions. Allah said:

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19:72 Then, we shall deliver the righteous and leave the wrongdoers therein on their knees.

19:87 They have no power of intercession, except for him who has taken a pledge from the Compassionate.

Alice: "taken a pledge from the Compassionate." What does that mean?

Imam: This implies two things, according to Moududi, One: "Intercession will be allowed only for the one who might have received permission from the Merciful ... and is deserving of His pardon." Two: "One will be able to plead intercession who might have got permission for this from the Merciful, and not those ones whom people themselves had made their intercessors without any reason."

Alice: Sounds complicated. Is it any wonder people say the Koran is difficult to understand?

Imam: Only those who have never read it while paying attention, being too lazy to do so. Have you not understood everything that I have repeated so far?

Alice: Yes, I have; you are very eloquent.

Imam: Allah is eloquent and it is He who has made the Koran easy to understand. Allah said:

11:1 ... [This is] a Book with Verses which are elaborately formulated and clearly expounded from the Wise, the All-Aware.

43:3 We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that perchance you may understand.

39:28 We made it an Arabic Qur'an without any defect that perchance they might be God-fearing.

Alice: I don't understand Arabic and yet I clearly understood, except for that last explanation from this Moududi fellow, everything you said.

Imam: The Koran is written in verses or ayats, therefore it is true that you will not be able to appreciate the rhythm and rhyme that only the

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original can convey, but any good translation, like the one that I use by Majid Fakhry for English worshippers who have not yet mastered Arabic, will be able to communicate the meaning of the poet's words – and the meaning of the words is what you should be concerned with.

Alice: Must all believers learn Arabic?

Imam: Yes, and public schools and madrassas around the world, many funded by the forward-looking Saudi government are making this transition to Arabic as a first language for many an easy transition.

Alice: Why must all believers learn Arabic?

Imam: It is obviously Allah's favourite language; but more importantly, Arabic is the great unifying force, producing the kind of cohesion among believers that only a common language can create and which will serve the believers in good stead in the ultimate struggle with the polyglot unbelievers and polytheists.

Alice: Will I have to speak Arabic on Judgement Day?

Imam: Allah understands all languages, but probably if you speak to Him in His preferred language He will be more receptive to your supplications.

Alice: Apart from the Arabic language, how can believers quickly recognize and connect with their co-religionists on Judgement Day?

Imam: Believers who did not take unbelievers as friends should look for the unsullied happy people. Allah said:

10:25 And Allah summons to the Abode of Peace and leads whomever He pleases to a straight path.

10:26 To those who do the good is the best reward (Paradise) and more (they will be able to look at Allah); and their faces shall not be covered with blackness or misery. Those are the people of Paradise, wherein they will abide forever.

Alice: What about believers who befriended unbelievers?

Imam: They will join their friends in Hell. Allah said:

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4:144 O believers, do not take the unbelievers for friends, instead of the believers. Do you wish to give Allah a clear proof against you?

Alice: What about People of the Book, those who believe in the Bible, Christian and Jews?

Imam: Allah said:

5:51 O believers, do not take the Jews and the Christians as friends; some of them are friends of each other. Whoever of you takes them as friends is surely one of them. Allah indeed does not guide the wrongdoers.

Alice: Are you saying that if I submit, and believe with certainty, I cannot be friends with those who have not submitted or will not believe with certainty; that I have to abandon the friends I have now? Why would Allah demand this?

Imam: Because unbelievers will try to corrupt you, including your former unbelieving friends. Allah said:

3:118 O believers, do not take as close friends other than your own people (other than your co-religionists); they will spare no effort to corrupt you and wish to see you suffer. Hatred has already been manifest in what they utter, but what their hearts conceal is greater still. We have made clear Our Signs to you if only you understand.

Alice: What if I don't let them corrupt me?

Imam: It does not matter. The simple fact that you made friends with unbelievers is enough for Allah to send you to Hell, and rightly so, your disobedience of His Command to not make friends with them is all the proof He needs that you are not a true believer and therefore not deserving of His Mercy.

4:144 O believers, do not take the unbelievers for friends, instead of the believers. Do you wish to give Allah a clear proof against you?

Alice: At least misery will have company. Beautiful black faces to share the wretchedness visited by a quick to anger, insecure, easily offended deity.

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Imam: Don't be so sure. Former companions in unbelief, on Judgement Day, will turn against each other. Allah said:

43:67 Friends on that Day shall be enemies of one another;
except for the God-fearing.

Alice: So unbelievers, on that Day, should not seek out other unbelievers?

Imam: They will be difficult to avoid, for unbelievers will be chained together, and your so-called "beautiful black faces" will be the result of scorching by fire. Allah said:

39:60 On the Day of Resurrection, you will see those who told lies against Allah with their faces blackened. Is not there in Hell a resting-place for the arrogant?

14:48 On the Day the earth shall change into another earth, and the heavens too; and they shall appear before Allah, the One, the Conqueror.

14:49 And you will see the wicked sinners on that Day bound together in chains.

14:50 Their garments made of pitch and their faces on fire.

14:51 That Allah may reward every soul according to what it has earned. Surely Allah is Quick at reckoning.

Alice: The Compassionate is One Unforgiving God indeed!

Imam: Believers know otherwise.

Alice: What is this about "the earth shall change into another earth"?

Imam: The earth will take quite a beating on Judgement Day. In fact, at one point, Allah smashes it to bits. Allah said:

69:13 Then when the Trumpet shall be blown a single time;

69:14 And the earth and the mountains shall be lifted and then crushed with a single blow.

Alice: What has this to do with the earth changing into another earth?

Imam: If Judgement Day is to take place on Earth, Allah will need a

useable planet and this is where "another earth" comes in. Moududi explained it this way, He said that:

It is obvious ... from the Qur'an that on the occasion of Resurrection, the Earth and the Heavens will not be totally destroyed but at the blowing of the "First Trumpet", the existing physical system shall be disarranged. After this, between the blowing of the "First" and the "Last Trumpet" the present form and aspect of the earth and the heavens shall be transformed and a new physical system with new physical laws will come into existence. That will be the world of the Hereafter. When the "Last Trumpet" will be blown, all human beings from Adam to those born before the "First Trumpet", shall be brought to life and appear before Allah. The Qur'an calls this (Hashr) which literally means "to muster and gather together". It appears from the wording of the Qur'an and some clear statements in the Traditions that this will take place on this Earth. The "Seat of Judgement" and the "Scales" will be established on the Earth and the decisions will be passed here.

Alice: It will be a be tight squeeze. Imagine the earth with more than a hundred or two hundred billion people milling about.

Imam: Maybe that is why Allah will flatten the mountains, and send them careening across the sky, to make more room. Allah said:

20:105 And they will ask about the mountains, say: "My Lord will reduce them to dust,

20:106 "And leave them as bare flatland,

20:107 "In which you see no ups and downs."

27:88 And you will see the mountains and suppose them immobile, whereas they are passing quickly like clouds - the Handiwork of Allah Who perfected everything. He is truly conversant with what you do.

Alice: So which is it: flying mountains, or mountains of dust?

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Imam: [*showing impatience*] Again, remember what I said about the order of events in the Koran.

Alice: Does that mean that if flying mountains come first, they will eventually come to rest so that Allah can smash them into dust?

Imam: [*stroking his forehead as if he has a headache*]. Women! It is as if I am taking questions from my two-year-old.

Alice: Sorry I asked. How will Allah be able to judge billions of people and jinn in just one day?

Imam: Judgement Day will last 50 thousand years. That should be plenty of time to judge everyone: Allah said:

70:4 Unto Him the angels and the spirit (Gabriel) ascend on a day the duration thereof is fifty thousand years.

Alice: With all the souls Allah will be sending to Hell, how will he know when it's full?

Imam: He will ask it. Allah said:

50:30 "On the Day We shall say to Hell: 'Are you full?', and it shall respond: "Is there more to come?"

Alice: Hell can speak. Who would have imagined!

Imam: As I said before, Hell is a living thing. Were you not listening?

Alice: Yes, but I expected it to growl or something, like an animal, which it obviously isn't, if it can speak.

Imam: Any other question?

Alice: Yes, will I be allowed to carry anything?

Imam: You will be allowed to carry your book of good and bad deeds which will be given to you by an angel. If the angel gives it to you in your left hand, or behind your back, Judgement Day will only be the beginning of a very unpleasant experience. If you are given your book in your right hand however, Paradise is a book-reading away. Allah said:

17:71 The Day [will come] when We will call every people with their leader. Then they who are given their book in their right hand – those will read their book and will not be

wronged a whit.

84:8 He shall be called to an easy reckoning.

84:9 And shall go back to his people well pleased.

Alice: That sounds efficient but it hardly seems fair.

Imam: Unbelievers are undeserving of Allah's Fairness; and it won't be that efficient, for efficiency is not what it is all about. Everyone who was given his book of good and bad deeds in his right hand will be clamoring for Allah's attention, wanting Him, or perhaps his friends, to read it in front of everybody, knowing Paradise is theirs.

69:19 As for him who has been given his book in his right hand, he shall say: "Come along, read my book.

Alice: And He will do that, read their book while billions of people, angels and jinn stand around doing nothing?

Imam: He may let some of those who are given their book in their right hand read it out loud to the assembled masses. Allah said:

78:38 The Day when the Spirit (the angel Gabriel) and the angels shall stand in line; none shall speak except him whom the Compassionate has allowed and has spoken the truth.

Alice: Will the unbelievers be allowed to read their books of good and bad deeds?

Imam: They will be forced to read it in front of everyone. How humiliating! Allah said:

17:13 And every man's omen We have fastened to his neck; and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall bring out for him a book which he will find spread wide open, [saying to him]:

17:14 "Read your book; your own soul shall suffice today as reckoner against you."

Alice: How will Allah make His entrance on Judgement Day?

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Imam: He will appear before the jinn and the assembled men, women and children carried around on His Throne by the eight angels mentioned earlier, while millions of other angels gather around praising Him and asking him to forgive the believers for any sins they may have committed. Allah said:

40:7 Those who carry the Throne and those around it proclaim the praise of their Lord, believe in Him and ask forgiveness for the believers: "Lord, You have encompassed everything in mercy and knowledge; so forgive those who have repented and followed your Path, and guard them against the punishment of Hell.

40:8 "Lord, and admit them into the Gardens of Eden which You have promised them and those who have been righteous, of their fathers, their spouses and their progeny. You are indeed the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

Alice: That WILL BE impressive.

Imam: Once everyone has settled down, there will be an official announcement for the unbelievers, who will be allowed to say a few words on their behalf. Allah said:

40:10 To the unbelievers it shall be announced: "Allah's contempt is greater than your self-contempt, when you were summoned to believe, but you disbelieved."

40:11 They will say: "Our Lord, You have caused us to be dead twice and brought us to life twice, and so we have confessed our sins. Is there now a way out?"

Alice: So there is a way out?

Imam: There is no way out! Allah said:

42:44 Whoever Allah leads astray will have no protector apart from Him; and you will see the wrongdoers when they see the punishment saying: "Is there a way of going back?"

42:45 You will see them being exposed to it (the Fire), abject in their humiliation, looking askew. The believers will say: "The losers are truly those who have lost themselves and

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their families on the Day of Resurrection. Surely, the wrongdoers will suffer lasting punishment."

42:46 They have no protectors to support them, apart from Allah. Whoever Allah leads astray has no way out.

Alice: You said that for those who are given their books of good and bad deeds in their left hand or behind their backs, Judgement Day will be the beginning of a very unpleasant experience. What did you mean by that?

Imam: I was trying to spare you having to listen to more of the painful punishment that unbelievers can expect. But if you insist, Allah said:

69:25 But as for him who is given his book in his left hand,
he shall say: "Would that I had never been given my book,

69:26 "And that I did not know what my account is;

69:27 "Would that it had been the final death blow.

69:28 "My wealth has not availed me;

69:29 "And my authority has vanished from me."

69:30 [It will be said:] "Take him and shackle him;

69:31 "Then let him roast in Hell.

69:32 "Then in a chain whose length is seventy cubits, tie him up."

84:10 But as for him who is given his book behind his back;

84:11 He shall call out: "Perdition!"

84:12 And burn in Hell-fire.

Alice: At least that part won't last long.

Imam: Not necessarily. Allah will want those He often refers to as Companions of the Left to know exactly why they are going to Hell and to marvel at what an accurate and meticulous record-keeper He is. Allah said:

18:49 And the book will be set down, and you will see the

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wicked apprehensive at what is in it, and they will say: "Woe betide us. What book is this? It does not leave out anything, small or big, but enumerates it." And they will find what they did in front of them; and your Lord will not wrong any one.

Alice: Does Allah have something against left-handed people?

Imam: No, of course not! His equating right with good and left with bad is just an illustration of good and bad.

Alice: So the actual judgement begins with a reading, before Allah, of a person's book of good and bad deeds?

Imam: First, all will have to answer at least one question, a trick question; and then, for the unbelievers only, an additional straightforward question whose answer may surprise you.

Alice: A trick question on such a momentous occasion!!! You can't be serious?

Imam: I am serious; this is a serious matter. Allah will ask everyone who comes before Him to be judged how many days they have lingered.

Alice: Lingered where?

Imam: Lingered on Earth.

Alice: That's easy enough.

Imam: As I said before, it is a trick question. Allah said:

23:112 He (Allah) will say: "How long did you linger on earth, in terms of years?"

23:113 They will say: "We lingered a day or a part of a day; so ask those who count?"

Alice: Did Allah actually say that "He will say" instead of "I will say"?

Imam: Allah often uses the third person to refer to Himself; nothing sinister there.

Alice: Some people would say that this is evidence of someone putting words in Allah's mouth, not Allah speaking,

Imam: They will burn in Hell.

Alice: Why would those who are asked how long they have lingered on Earth say a day or less?

Imam: Scholars have argued that this is Allah's way of making a statement about life being short. He will actually agree, more or less, with the estimate given by the mystified soul appearing before Him. Allah said:

23:114 He (Allah) will say: "You only lingered for a little while, if only you knew."

Alice: And that other question?

Imam: Allah will ask the unbelievers if they agree that their punishment is just.

Alice: And they will say no, of course. Who in her right mind would say yes, especially with all the revelations about how the unbelievers will try to avoid being roasted?

Imam: You assume too much, and that is a dangerous thing young lady. Allah said:

46:34 And on the Day that the unbelievers shall be exposed to the Fire [they will be asked]: "Is this not just?" They will say: "Yes, indeed, by our Lord." He will then say: "Taste now the punishment for your disbelief."

Alice: Can unbelievers plead their case?

Imam: Unbelievers have no case! And Allah will let them know in no uncertain terms. Allah said:

50:28 He (Allah) will say: "Do not dispute before Me; for I warned you in advance.

The only people He will lend a receptive ear to on Judgement Day are well-spoken repentant believers. Allah said:

20:109 On that Day, intercession will not avail, except him to whom the Compassionate gives leave and He is pleased with his words.

Alice: What about those who have "taken a pledge from the Compassionate"?

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Imam: And those.

Alice: What about some kind of lawyer to advise the unbelievers to say NO when asked if they are happy to burn in Hell for an eternity?

Imam: Silly girl. There was no such thing as lawyers when the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, received the Koran.

Alice: Yes, but in the Prophet's time, weren't relatives and family members allowed to plead for a clan member accused of wrongdoing?

Imam: Yes, but on Judgement Day, would-be intercessors need not bother. Allah said:

74:48 But the intercession of the intercessors will avail them nothing.

Alice: What about friends pleading with Allah on your behalf?

Imam: Allah said:

70:10 And no friend shall ask an intimate friend.

70:11 They shall be made to see each other. The criminal wishes that he would be redeemed from the punishment by his sons;

70:12 His spouse and his brother;

70:13 And his clan, who gives him refuge;

70:14 And everyone on earth; that he might save him.

Alice: What about a sister or a daughter?

Imam: Daughters and sisters are not mentioned, and it makes sense, females not being good at remembering things accurately.

Alice: Will women be at least allowed to talk to each other on Judgement Day?

Imam: Believers and unbelievers, male and female will be able to discuss their relative situations, but not too loud if they are close to Allah, except for the "straightest of them". Allah said:

20:108 On that Day, they will have to follow the caller who is not crooked, and the voices shall be hushed unto the

Compassionate, so that you will hear nothing but whispering.

Alice: Will Allah know what they will be whispering about?

Imam: Of course, He is the All-Hearing. Allah said:

20:102 On the Day when the trumpet shall be blown and We will gather the wicked sinners blue-eyed [with terror];

20:103 Whispering to each other: "You have only lingered for ten [days]."

20:104 We know better what they say; for the straightest of them in direction will say: "You have only lingered a single day."

Alice: Blue-eyed with terror. I did not know terror did that. I thought the answer was less than a day?

Imam: The wrongdoers may revise their estimate after hearing the answer of "who have been given knowledge and faith." Allah said:

30:55 And the day the Hour comes, the criminals shall swear that they did not linger more than an hour. Thus they had been perverted.

30:56 But those who have been given knowledge and faith will say: "You have lingered in Allah's Book till the Day of Resurrection. This is the Day of Resurrection but you did not know."

30:57 On that Day, the excuses of the wrongdoers will not avail them and they will not be allowed to plead for pardon.

Alice: Knowing the answer to the trick question, which anyone who has read the Koran will now know, will obviously not be enough for the Compassionate not to consider someone a criminal. What advice, in addition to absolute submission to Allah and acknowledging the exalted position of the Prophet Muhammad, would you have to avoid being called out by Allah?

Imam: Believe with certainty; do the good deeds; if you have sinned, sincerely repent; and never but never – Allah warns you often

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enough – associate another god with Him or place one on a higher pedestal – and don't think that you can lie your way into Paradise. Allah said:

28:67 But he who repents, believes and does the righteous deed, perchance he will be among the prosperous.

28:68 Your Lord creates and chooses whatever He wills; they have no choice. Glory be to Allah and may He be exalted above what they associate!

28:69 And your Lord knows what their breasts conceal and what they reveal.

Alice: Good advice. Thank you.

Imam: And did I mention, do not be extravagant. Allah said:

34:34 We have never sent forth a warner to a city but the extravagant in it said: "We disbelieve in the message you have been sent with."

34:35 They say: "We have more abundant wealth and children and we will not be punished."

34:36 Say [O Muhammad]: "Indeed, my Lord expands the provision to whomever He wishes and restricts it; but most people do not know."

34:37 It is not your wealth or your children that bring you closer to Us, but it is he who believes and does the righteous deeds. To those will be meted the double reward and in the lofty chambers they shall be secure.

Alice: What does Allah mean by "it is not your children that bring you closer to Us"? Since when is raising your children not doing the right, the virtuous thing?

Imam: What Allah means when He says "it is not your children that bring you closer to Us" is that simply having and raising a family will not be counted as a good deed. If you are a believer and your good deeds outnumber your bad deeds then Paradise is almost a certainty. Children, as Allah reminds us, are often a temptation not to do what is righteous and mothers are the most vulnerable to their whims and desires. Allah said:

8:28 And know that your wealth and your children are a temptation, and with Allah is a great reward.

Alice: Children a temptation to do evil. I do not understand. Why would someone say something like that?

Imam: Anyone who has raised a family knows that sometimes it is difficult to say no to a child. You must not let your children's wants interfere with your Worship of Allah and doing as He has commanded in His Koran if you aspire to the greatest reward of all.

28:60 Whatever you have been given is merely the pleasure of this life and its finery; but what Allah has in His possession is better and more lasting. Do you not understand?

Alice is getting angry.

Alice: I think, for most mothers, a child is a great reward and not a temptation to do evil. That is something an eternal woman-hating bachelor might say.

Imam: The best reward is with the God who has no need of children or spouses and who only hates those who refuse to believe, whether they be men or women. DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND?

Alice: Not better than a mother's love for her children and the love they have for her! WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?

Imam: He is Allah, and you should not forget that.

Alice: I did not mean to be disrespectful, but I don't think it is extravagant for a mother to care more about her children's welfare and their well-being than a place in Paradise.

Imam: Mothers' misguided priorities are one reason why Hell is mainly for their benefit.

Alice: How could you say such a horrible thing?

Imam: It may be horrible, but it is the truth. The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, to whom Allah gave glimpses of Hell, like Allah, only speaks the truth, even the unspeakable truth.

Alice: How would he, the Prophet, know who are, who will be burning in Hell since Judgement has yet to happen? This mixing of

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the past, present and future in Allah's revelations, as if everything is happening all at once, is so maddening. What the Prophet saw had to be an empty, lukewarm Hell with no unbelievers on fire, Judgement Day still being in the future?

Imam: Allah gave the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, visions of what, I agree, would have had to be a future Hell. In some of these visions the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, reported seeing mainly women on fire. One reason God's Messenger gave for so many wives and mothers roasting in Hell for an eternity was that they had been ungrateful for the favours their husbands bestowed upon them. The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, described what he saw and why it was this way.

I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful. It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?) He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them."

Alice: Has anyone ever offered the peace and blessings of God on a woman?

Imam: Not to my knowledge. Such blessings are usually reserved for Allah's Messengers.

Alice: Of course females, especially mothers, are so undeserving of the honour.

Imam: Are you being sarcastic again?

Alice: Can I avoid a wife and a mother's increased risk of going to Hell by believing with certainty, submitting, but remaining celibate?

Imam: I would not recommend it. Allah said:

24:32 Encourage the unmarried among you and the righteous among your servants and maids to marry. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His Bounty. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

Alice: Will women have to prepare meals for their husbands on Judgement Day, or will Allah provide?

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Imam: Allah, perhaps to remove part of a woman's burden on such a Day, will provide; but the unbelievers may want to pass on it. Allah said:

56:51 "Then you, erring ones and denouncers,

56:52 "Shall eat from the Tree of Bitterness,

56:53 "Filling your bellies therefrom,

56:54 "And drinking on top of it boiling water,

56:55 "Lapping it like thirsty camels."

56:56 That shall be their meal on the Day of Judgement.

Alice: What if the Devil made me do it: for example, worship another god instead of Allah?

Imam: The Devil will dispute that claim. Allah said:

50:27 His companion (his demon) will say: "Our Lord, I did not mislead him; but he was already in profound error."

19:84 So do not hasten (O Muhammad) [their punishment]
We are indeed counting for them the days.

19:83 Have you not seen how We sent the devils against the unbelievers to keep inciting them to [sin].

Alice: Did Allah just admit that He sent devils to incite the unbelievers to sin even more?

Imam: Yes, but only to lost causes, unbelievers who refuse to believe no matter what.

Alice: But why?

Imam: Allah's punishment is always proportional to the offence. By getting unbelievers to be even more evil, He gets to increase their punishment.

Alice: That is wicked! What if an unbeliever repudiates the gods she used to worship?

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Imam: If she did not repudiate them when she walked the earth, she is a criminal not worthy of Allah's Mercy and repudiating them on Judgement Day will be pointless. Allah said:

30:14 And on the Day that the Hour comes, they (the criminals and the believers) shall be divided.

30:15 As for those who have believed and done the righteous deeds, they will be in a garden, fully joyful.

30:16 But as for those who have disbelieved and denounced Our Signs and the Encounter of the Hereafter as lies, those shall be summoned to suffer the punishment.

Alice: What if I am a weak person who could not help but submit to the domineering, to the bad boys? Bad boys can sometimes be so irresistible.

Imam: Being mentally or emotionally handicapped, as such compulsory behavior would indicate, will not sway the Compassionate. Believing in His revelations would have given you the strength to resist those you call "the bad boys" and whom Allah refers to as "the overbearing". Allah said:

14:21 And when they all appear before Allah, the weak will say to the overbearing: "We were indeed your followers; can you, then, do anything to save us from Allah's Punishment?" They will say: "Had Allah guided us, we would have guided you. Whether we fear or forbear, we have no escape."

Alice: Is there any way of getting back at the bad boys? I am sure many women who have been misled by them would like to know.

Imam: A misled unbeliever may want to join the mob that will ask Allah to be allowed to trample the men and jinn who led them astray. Allah said:

41:29 The unbelievers shall say: "Lord, show us both those who led us astray of jinn and men, that we might trample them under our feet and that they may be reckoned among the lowliest of creatures."

Alice: I have never met a jinn. Have you ever met a jinn?

Imam: No I have not. But you may get to know some of them if you are among the losers on Judgement Day. Allah said:

46:18 Those against whom the Decree (the punishment) was pronounced, from among nations which passed away before them, both of jinn and mankind, were truly the losers.

Alice: What if I was oppressed or treated badly by people in power?

Imam: If you mean downtrodden, you are also without hope. Allah said:

34:31 The unbelievers say: "We will never believe in this Qur'an, nor in what came before it." If you could only see when the wrongdoers are arrayed before their Lord, each one reproaching the other, the downtrodden saying to the arrogant: "But for you, we would have been believers."

34:32 The arrogant will say to the downtrodden: "Did we really bar you from the guidance after it came to you? No, you were rather ungodly."

34:33 Then the downtrodden will say to the arrogant: "It was rather your cunning night and day, when you commanded us to disbelieve in Allah and assign equals to Him." They will be secretly remorseful, when they see the punishment. We will put shackles around the necks of the unbelievers; will they be rewarded but for what they used to do?

Alice: What if I was misled by people I trusted, such as a community leader, politician, priest or rabbi?

Imam: Gullibility is no excuse. But if it gives you any satisfaction, you will be able to join the chorus of the gullible and demand that Allah doubles the punishment and curses mightily those in whom you wrongfully put your trust. Allah said:

33:64 Allah has cursed the unbelievers and prepared for them a blazing fire;

33:65 Dwelling therein forever, not finding a protector or supporter.

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33:66 The day their faces are turned around in the Fire, they will say: "If only we had obeyed Allah and the Messenger."

33:67 They will say: "Lord, we have obeyed our masters and our chiefs and so they have led us astray.

33:68 "Lord, give them the punishment twofold and curse them mightily."

Alice: What if I believed those who said the Prophet was simply repeating "Fables of the ancients"; that I was an ignorant?

Imam: Ignorant people will be joining those who accused His Messenger of telling tales, the arrogant, in Hell. Allah has dealt with their types before. Allah said:

16:24 And if it is said to them: "What has your Lord revealed?" they say: "Fables of the ancients."

16:25 So let them on the Day of Resurrection bear in full their burdens and some of the burdens of the ignorant whom they lead astray. How evil is that which they shall bear!

Alice: What if I was an unbeliever and now believe? Can I expect any mercy from Allah?

Imam: Allah knows you are lying, Allah said:

6:27 And if only you could see when they are stationed before the Fire and thus they say: "Would that we could be brought back so that we would not denounce the Revelations of our Lord but would be part of the believers."

6:28 Indeed, what they used to conceal before will become clear to them; and were they returned [to life], they would surely go back to that which they were forbidden from. They are indeed liars.

Alice: But what if I am not lying?

Imam: It won't matter. Allah said:

16:84 And on the Day when We raise from every nation a witness, the unbelievers shall not be given leave or allowed to repent.

Alice: What if I am a believer but I have committed sins, real evil stuff?

Imam: That is where Allah's Mercy comes in. Allah said:

64:9 On the Day when He shall gather you for the Day of Forgathering. That is the Day of Mutual Exchange. He who believes in Allah and acts righteously, He will acquit him of his evil actions and admit him into Gardens beneath which rivers flow, dwelling therein forever. That is the great triumph.

Alice: The Day of Mutual Exchange!!! Are we going to be exchanging gifts; should I bring a gift? What type of gift and for whom?

Imam: According to a respected Islamic scholar by the name of al-Tabari, that is the day when the inhabitants of Paradise defrauded the inhabitants of Hell.

Alice: They did what?

Imam: Tabari has been dead for more than a thousand years, but I think what he meant to say was that a believer who has tried to live a good life, even if he has done bad things like stealing from the poor souls in Hell, he will be forgiven by Allah, but not the unbelievers. Allah did say:

64:10 And those who disbelieved and denounced Our Signs, those are the Companions of the Fire, dwelling therein forever; and what a miserable fate!

Alice: Is it true that the Devil will be sitting in judgement with Allah on Judgement Day?

Imam: Perhaps not sitting, but on Judgement Day the Devil will be with Allah and the Prophets mocking the poor souls who allegedly followed his advice, and he will agree with Allah that they all should suffer a painful punishment. Allah said:

14:22 And the Devil said when the issue was settled: "Allah has surely given you a true promise; and I made you a promise but did not keep it. I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you answered me. Do not blame me then, but blame yourselves; I cannot help you

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and you cannot help me. I deny your associating me [with Allah] before. The wrongdoers will have a very painful punishment.”

Alice: Anybody else?

Imam: Yes. For the big Day, Allah will have invited all the other gods that unbelievers believed in.

Alice: So these others god, which Allah constantly warns about worshipping are real, they actually do exist?

Imam: Allah has reproduced, for the occasion, the gods the unbelievers imagined. In fact, He told the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, to tell those who think they have gods interceding on their behalf with Him that they are badly mistaken for He is not aware of their existence, and an All-Knowing God would have known. Allah said:

10:18 They worship, apart from Allah, what neither harms nor benefits them, and (the unbelievers) say: “These are our intercessors with Allah.” Say (O Muhammad): “Do you inform Allah about what He does not know in the heavens or on earth?” Glory be to Him, and may He be exalted above what they associate [with Him]!

Alice: That is logical, if you believe in an All-Knowing, Omnipresent God. But still, it’s weird that Allah would, in one revelation, have unbelievers believe that these lesser gods are figments of their imagination, and in another – in fact, in more than one revelation – give these assumed non-existent competing deities center stage on Judgement Day.

Imam: It is not at all weird. Allah does not do weird!

Alice: Are these lesser gods of someone's imagination there to try to convince Allah not to send those who believed in them to Hell?

Imam: Of course not! They are there to disown those who believed in them. In the surah *Jonah*, a surah being a chapter of the Koran, they will say that they were unaware that they were being worshipped. Allah said:

10:28 On the Day We will muster them all together; then We will say to those who set up associates with Allah: "Stay in your places, you and your associates." Then We shall separate them, and their associates will say: "You were not worshipping us."

10:29 "Allah is a sufficient witness between us and you; for we were unaware of your worshipping us."

In the surah *The Bees*, they will call those who worshipped them liars to their faces, as Allah always knew they would. Allah said:

16:86 And when those who associated other gods with Allah see their associates they shall say: "Our Lord, these are our associates whom we used to call upon besides you." But their associates will retort: "Surely you are liars."

In the surah *Mary*, Allah again reveals that the other gods repudiated and turned against those who worshipped them. Allah said:

19:81 And they took, besides Allah, other gods, to be for them a source of strength.

19:82 No, they shall repudiate their worship and turn against them.

Alice: Why would these non-existent claimants to the godhead call those who worshipped them liars to their face and so on?

Imam: By agreeing with Allah that those who worshipped them should spend an eternity in Hell, these lesser gods hope to avoid their worshippers' fates. Allah said:

28:62 On the Day He shall call them saying: "Where are my associates that you used to allege?"

28:63 Those upon whom the sentence will be passed shall say: "Lord, those whom we induced into error, we induced into error just as we were induced. We proclaim our innocence to You. It was not us they were worshipping."

28:64 And it will be said to them: "Call your associates"; and so they call them, but the associates will not answer. They saw the punishment and they wished they had been well guided.

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As the conversation goes on, Alice's scepticism and deception grows and is reflected in her attitude.

Alice: Imaginary gods afraid of going to Hell? Unbelievable! Talking imaginary gods which everyone can see and hear; and Allah will believe these gods when they say that those who worshipped them are liars?

Imam: They may be lesser imaginary gods, but gods nonetheless, and gods tell the truth, so why should the one and only God not believe them?

Alice: Allah will accept the self-serving testimony of what you say are figments of an unbeliever's imagination, but send men, women and children to burn in Hell for eternity for believing in these same alleged make-believe gods. Isn't Allah applying a double standard here: do as I say, not as I do, or I am sending you all to Hell?

Imam: Allah does as Allah pleases; He is Allah! Allah said:

17:54 Your Lord knows you best. If He pleases, He will have mercy on you, and if He pleases He will torture you ...

Alice: Please remind me again on whom Allah will have mercy.

Imam: Allah's Mercy is for unwavering believers who have committed offenses such as stealing, killing another without just cause and so on, repented and made amends and remained steadfast in their belief in Allah's Mercy.

Alice: Am I to understand that a steadfast believer will be forgiven his transgressions if he believes he will be forgiven his transgressions?

Imam: Despairing of Allah's Mercy is not only the second greatest sin in Islam, but it is a sin against God, just like believing in other gods, and he who commits such an unforgivable sin, like women who commit adultery, will burn in Hell for an eternity.

Alice: Adultery is not a sin against Allah or His Messenger, so why is an adulteress not deserving of Allah's Mercy?

Imam: Because there is no way for a woman to make amends for having had sex with someone other than her husband. How would you undo that? How could she undo the dishonour that she has

brought on herself, her family and her husband? It is not enough that the adulteress will roast in Hell for eternity, but steps must be taken in the here-and-now to eradicate the reminder of this dishonour and to discourage such destructive behavior.

Alice: Such as stoning the adulteress to death.

Imam: I thought you came here to learn about the Day of Judgement?

Alice: Yes, I am sorry. Are the devil and make-believe gods the only snitches about which one should be wary?

Imam: I would not call them snitches, but yes, there are more. The next informer is not a figment of anyone's imagination. Its testimony is beyond any doubt for it participated in, or was a witness to the transgression against Allah and His Messenger!

Alice: IT!!!

Imam: An unbeliever's own body parts will bear witness against their owner. Allah said:

36:65 Today, We set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us and their feet will bear witness regarding what they used to earn.

Alice: Allah does not trust a person to tell the truth so He will seal her mouth so that she does not contradict her hands and feet, who will testify against her in some silent grotesque disjointed song and dance, I must assume. Does that mean that a person's hands and feet won't feel the pain of burning and that is why they are willing to testify against their owner?

Imam: Of course not. That would be silly.

Alice: And Allah will believe these, these, these sock-puppets.

Imam: Sock-puppets???

Alice: I am sorry, it is the image that came to mind when you mentioned talking hands. A sock-puppet is a puppet made from a sock or something similar. When you fit a hand into the closed end of the sock, the puppet can be seemingly made to "talk".

Imam: Are you insinuating that it is Allah talking, like a common ventriloquist, not the hands or the feet?

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Alice: Of course not.

Imam: If it was Allah talking, would He have other appendages confirm what the hands and feet will say? Allah said:

41:19 And when the enemies of Allah are mustered unto the Fire, they shall be held in check.

41:20 When they reach it, their hearing, sights and skins shall bear witness against them regarding what they used to do.

41:21 And they will say to their skins: "Why did you bear witness against us?" They will say: "Allah Who gave everything speech gave us speech, and He is the One Who created you the first time and unto Him you shall be returned."

41:22 You did not try to hide from the witness that your hearing, sights and skins would bear against you; but you thought that Allah does not know much of what you do.

Alice: Talking limbs; that is so weird it's almost cartoonish.

Imam: DO YOU THINK THIS IS A JOKE? Judgement Day is no joke and you would be well advised to remember that.

Alice: I am not laughing; it is not a laughing matter. On Judgement Day Allah will actually be doing to people what the writers of the Simpsons imagined a sadistic blue mouse doing to a hapless cat.

Imam: What are you talking about?

Alice: Itchy and Scratchy. Nevermind. You have not mentioned the Prophet as a witness against the unbelievers. He seems a natural?

Imam: Earlier on in his mission when the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, was trying to win converts by being nice and conciliatory, Allah told him to tell the Meccan unbelievers, his tribesman for the most part, that His Messenger would not be questioned about what they did. Allah said:

34:23 Intercession will not avail with Him except for him whom He gave permission; until fear is lifted from their

hearts, then they will say: "What has your Lord said?", they will say: "The truth, and He is the All-High, the Great One."

34:24 Say: "Who provides for you out of the heavens and the earth?", say: "Allah, and you or we are either rightly guided or in manifest error."

34:25 Say: "You will not be questioned about our misdeeds and we will not be questioned about what you do."

Alice: Did Allah reveal that the perfect human being is not perfect, that he too will be questioned about his misdeeds?

Imam: No, not at all. What Allah revealed was that His Messenger was simply trying to convince his brethren that he was a normal person like them, which the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, was physically, but perfect in every way and incapable of sinning.

Alice: So the Prophet will not judge or be judged. Being perfect, that makes sense, I guess. But will the perfect human being just stand there with a smug, I-told-you-so look on his face as His Mentor hands out a brand of justice that would make ordinary people turn away in horror?

Imam: What do you mean by ordinary people?

Alice: People to whom compassionate means being aware of the suffering of another and wishing to relieve it, and merciful as being unconditionally kind, even to those who don't worship the same god you do.

Imam: Believers are not ordinary people, they are better than that. You cannot be unconditionally kind to an unbeliever and pretend to be a believer. How could you fight, kill and die in the Way of Allah while being unconditionally kind to those who will not submit to His Will under any circumstances?

Alice: But isn't being unconditionally kind, especially when there is no real harm done, a good thing?

Imam: NO HARM DONE? People who don't submit are a bad influence and will encourage other people not to submit, forcing the Hand of the Compassionate, Who will have no choice but to condemn

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them all to an eternity on fire. Allah has, and the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, had the courage and the internal fortitude to do what needs to be done to the unbelievers, as do most believers, so as to save as many people as possible from the Wrath of the Compassionate. A female would not understand.

Alice: Women give birth; they understand pain, which may be why they seldom wish to see other people suffer, no matter what.

Imam: Another of women's many failings; they will shy away from inflicting pain, even death, when one or the other, or both, is what Allah requires of them. Most believing men have no qualms in doing what Allah expects of them, when circumstances demand it of course.

Alice: What you consider a failing, many would consider being human, being compassionate.

Imam: An ordinary human being, not an exceptional one obviously.

Alice: On Judgement Day what type of human being will the Prophet be?

Imam: He will not be standing next to Allah with a smug look on his face and doing nothing, as you so inelegantly put it. In Islamic traditions, the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, will intervene on behalf of as many as forty thousand people who, without his intervention, would spend eternity on fire.

Alice: You mean the Prophet will intervene to save forty thousand unbelievers from Allah's Wrath? I am impressed.

Imam: Again, don't be silly. As I may have told you earlier, whenever a believer wishes the peace and the blessings of God upon the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, an angel goes to his grave and brings him the good news. On the Day of Judgement, Allah will listen to some pleas for mercy from His Messenger for believers that He has sentenced to Hell's fires. Since the Compassionate will only allow a limited number of pleas, those on whose behalf the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, will plead are expected to be those that have the most often wished him *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*.

Alice: It was too much to hope for. What about the lesser prophets who spread their message of death and doom for the unbelievers before the greatest of them all took up the Call?

Imam: All the prophets from the Bible and the Koran will be given the opportunity to get back at those who did not believe they were sent by Allah. However, the lesser Messengers may not have that much to say, except perhaps those who have written things down. Allah said:

16:89 On the Day when We shall raise up in each nation a witness against them from among themselves. We will bring you (Muhammad) as a witness against them. We have revealed to you the Book (the Koran) which explains everything, as a guide, a mercy and good news to those who submit.

5:109 The Day when Allah shall assemble the Messengers, then say: "What response were you given?" They shall say: "We have no knowledge; You are indeed the Knower of the Unseen."

Alice: Earlier on you said that Allah revealed that His Messenger said, to whom he was preaching, that "You will not be questioned about our misdeeds and we will not be questioned about what you do." What has changed?

Imam: The Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*, was preaching to his Meccan kin, for the most part, at the time. He may not have to testify against his kin, most, if not all became Muslims after Mecca's surrender.

Alice: Uh, uh. Allah sent Messengers when writing was chiseled hieroglyphics on stone tablets, if not earlier. Some of those Messengers will be dragging some heavy loads of evidence before the All-Knowing Judge on that fateful Day. And don't you find it ironic that Allah's lesser Messengers could write but not His Greatest Messenger?

Imam: Allah works in mysterious ways.

Alice: I guess that's it for the evidence against the unbelievers, with the calling of the Messengers as witnesses.

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Imam: Did I mention the scales?

Alice: The scales!!!

Imam: Allah said:

7:8 On that Day the weighing of the deeds will be just; those whose scales are heavy will prosper;

7:9 But those whose scales are light, are those who lost their souls on account of denying Our Revelations.

Alice loses it.

Alice: Enough already. Now we have a scale containing the good and bad deeds to decide who is going to Hell! First, I thought your guilt was decided when you were given your Book of good and bad deeds behind your back before you appeared in front of the All-Knowing Judge where that same book or another book may have been laid down. Then, for some reason, it was revealed that Allah would call the Devil as a witness for the prosecution, followed or preceded by the arrogant and others who allegedly mislead others into not believing or believing in too many gods - only God knows the order of appearance of witnesses for the prosecution - to deny that they had led the accused astray. Then there were all those revelations about all the supposedly non-existent other gods, which Allah admits to creating, appearing on behalf of the One All-Seeing, All-Hearing, All-Knowing God to bolster His case against the accused, all the while slinking away when the witnesses from every nation, present their proof of the unbelievers' guilt. Then there are all the Messengers, which one Islamic scholar estimated at more than 250,000, who will be called to testify against those who thought they were mad as hatters. And as if that was not enough, the body parts of the accused will be testifying against their owners in a grotesque imitation of someone with Lou Gehrig's disease! And now you are telling me that, after this mountain of real and surreal evidence against the unbelievers, there will be scales to decide who is going to Hell and who will be welcomed to enter Paradise. What is going on here?

Imam: What is going on here is Allah the Wise, the Compassionate being thorough. I have only revealed some of what Allah has to say about His Hell. If you thought Judgement Day was bad for the

evildoers, Hell is even worse and Allah does not want to send someone there by mistake, that is obvious. Allah will do what is right, no matter how long it takes.

Alice: What is right about allowing criminals into Paradise but sending honest, decent people, men and women, and children too young to understand, to burn in Hell for not believing?

Imam: A sin is what God says it is. Allah said that not believing in Him and only Him is the greatest sin of all, and that believing in Him is believing with unshakable certainty in everything He has revealed.

Alice: But ...

Imam: Should not people who commit the greatest sin of all not suffer the greatest punishment? No believer is completely evil all the time, which is why Allah weighs their bad deeds against their good deeds before deciding on their fate. But a person who does not believe in Allah and only Allah is being evil all of the time; committing the greatest sin of all, all of the time; the greatest evil of all, all of the time. Do you think such a person should be entitled to any mercy or compassion?

Alice: I don't know whether to laugh or cry that such a question would even come up.

Imam: It is not a laughing or a crying matter; it is a simple question which very much defines what Islam is all about. Women are only starting to understand what men who fight in the Way of Allah have understood for a long time.

Alice: It's no joke, I know. Judgement Day cannot be a joke for so many who you say fight in the Way of Allah, willing to kill those who would dismiss what you have told me, what Allah revealed about Judgement Day, as the ranting of a madman.

Imam: If you can't believe in God, in whom shall you believe? Allah, on many occasions, vouched for His Messenger's sanity, including when He asked people to rise and reflect that there was "no madness" in the Prophet, *the peace and blessings of God be upon him*. Allah said.

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15:6 They say: "O you, to whom the Reminder (the Qur'an) is revealed, you are indeed a madman.

34:46 Say: "I only give you one exhortation, that you arise for Allah in couples and singly, then to reflect that there is no madness in your companion (the Prophet). He is merely a warner on the eve of a terrible punishment."

Alice: I want to believe in God, in a god who is into reducing suffering not increasing it, and whose mercy is unconditional. I find it difficult to identify with Allah's definition of compassion and mercy, especially after what was revealed about Judgement Day.

Imam: What was revealed is that Allah will show mercy and compassion to those deserving of His Mercy and Compassion, the believers. DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND?

Alice: I do, in a bizarre sort of way.

Imam: What do you mean?

Alice: I used to read some of my brother's comic books. Superman was my favorite, superman had his doppelganger ...

Imam: Doppelganger???

Alice: An opposite. Bizarro was superman's opposite. He lived on a "bizarro world" where up was down, left was right, go meant stop, goodbye meant hello ... Bizarro is a term often used to describe a person or thing that uses a twisted form of logic.

Imam: "Bizarro world" is an interesting way to describe the world of the unbelievers.

Alice: Bizarro came to mind when Allah revealed that "the charmer" is the name of angels who beat up unbelievers while flying them to who-knows-where - Hell or to be judged; it is so confusing.

Imam: He is Allah; He can call His angels whatever He wants.

Alice: Of course. And He constantly refers to Himself as the Compassionate, the Merciful, yet the actions and verdicts of the Judge presiding over Judgement Day would lead some to believe that His understanding of Compassion and Mercy are different, perhaps even

the opposite of what, for example, Western dictionaries define as compassion and mercy.

Imam: A bizarro-world's definition.

Alice: The believers are going to Paradise because they have earned it and have no need of Allah's Compassion or Mercy. As to the criminals He welcomes into Paradise, His Compassion and Mercy amount to a pardon. Wouldn't real compassion and mercy have been to forgive those who, through no fault of their own, and in many cases because of Allah's admitted deliberate premeditated actions, failed to believe?

Imam: They failed to believe because of their arrogance, and Allah does not guide the arrogant.

Alice: Yes, many refused to submit because they were arrogant, I am sure; but for many, the Prophet was and is just another claimant to a special relationship with humanity's alleged invisible friend in the sky. It did not help that his message was so different than that of all the Messengers he said came before and with whom he claimed a kinship – Jesus in particular.

Imam: Jesus simply misunderstood Allah when He revealed that you should love your neighbour. Allah's command was that you should love the believers as you love yourself.

Alice: ... and hate those who do not believe.

Imam: HOW COULD YOU LOVE THOSE FOR WHOM ALLAH HAS RESERVED SUCH A PAINFUL PUNISHMENT?

Alice: And there we are.

Imam: It is time for you to go home, young lady.

Alice: *[picking up her shoes, she turns to leave, but not before adding]* Allah is right, and that makes me sad.

Imam: What makes you sad?

Alice: That we can never be friends. I could not take you as a friend, even if that was what you wished, knowing that by doing so I was dooming you to an eternity of agony on fire in Allah's Hell. I could never be that cruel.

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Imam: [*the imam is moved somewhat*] Worship Him and only Him, accept that there will be a Judgement Day as He describes, and believe with certainty and everything will be alright and we can all be friends.

Alice: If only it was that easy. So much pain, so much sorrow, so much horror ... and for what?

Imam: For a place in Paradise. Go home and praise Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, at every opportunity and never forget what was revealed to you today.

Alice: [*leaving the spotlight*] How could I forget? How could anyone forget?

Imam: [*returns to his Friday prayers*]

1:1 In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful,

1:2 Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds,

1:3 The Compassionate, the Merciful,

1:4 Master of the Day of Judgement,

1:5 Only You do we worship, and only You do we implore for help.

...

END